

**Alice Coachman Elementary School
Albany, Georgia**



TRANSCRIPT: "ASPECTS OF SCHOOL CULTURE"

STUDENT VOICES: The mission: The mission of Alice Coachman Elementary school is to provide opportunities for students to learn in a safe, structured, orderly environment with a strong emphasis on firm foundation of knowledge, high academic achievement in a variety of educational experiences that will lead to personal success.

PAT VICTOR, PRINCIPAL: Boys and girls, again, as you have heard from the beginning of time, you are smart, gifted, and talented. You will be successful this school year. You have been successful last year and previous years. What you need to do is continue to focus, listen to your teachers, follow the rules, make sure that you are here for the sole purpose of, you know what, teaching and learning. That is our theme, teaching and learning. When you do that you will always be successful. Thank you boys and girls for what I know will be a great day of teaching and learning. Thank you staff for what I know will be a fantastic day of teaching and learning.

There is a sheet that talks about conduct because if kids are not well behaved they are not learning. That was one thing that we hit hard in 1999. We have got to lay out a discipline plan that is going to bring about structure. Safe, structured, orderly environment: you will see that throughout the school. When they do the morning announcements, kindergarteners stand and recite the mission statement, and they talk about learning in a safe, structured, orderly environment with strong emphasis on a firm foundation of knowledge. That started day one in kindergarten because if you don't do it early you can't go back in third, fourth, and fifth grade and pick it up. Those AYP grades in third, fourth, and fifth, but if you have lost that foundation in kindergarten you are in trouble.

PARENT COORDINATOR: And one of the things I started when I got here was greeting parents in the morning time. So one of the things I do is, I stand out front in the mornings and the afternoons. I greet my parents. A lot of those parents are working parents. I greet them. We open the door for the kids and they, the kids appreciate it, but more than anything I think the parents appreciate it. It makes the kids feel special that someone is there to greet them in the morning time, to greet the parents and give that little wave they may need in the morning time.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER: I am fortunate enough to be involved with Alice Coachman on a number of different levels. I not only read to the children and I am an interactive reader so we do a lot of audience participation when we read. I also participate in their spelling bee.

I have been fortunate enough to join them for their graduation luncheon. If anyone has even had a chance to visit with, is just amazing. The respect that the faculty shows to the children in addition to what respect you see from the children to the faculty here is amazing. The interaction, the team efforts, the way the staff gets along and works together is unbelievable. I feel really humbled and blessed to come over here when I am able to do so.

PARENT VOICE: I believe the curriculum is right where it needs to be for today's students, particularly starting out with the pre-k and kindergarten. I think they are laying the foundation here for students to advance and go on to middle grades, high school, and college. I believe that is needed now-a-days. You can't go too far with at least a bachelor's. I think here is where the foundation is being laid at Alice Coachman.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER: I am a retired educator. I spent 30 years in the school system myself. Alice Coachman is extremely special to us here in Doherty County. You can tell by the number of volunteers you see sitting around the table. You have heard their stories. It all starts with leadership. You have to know that Mrs. Victor probably one of the greatest leaders in the state of Georgia. I agree with that. I have lived almost all my entire life here in Albany. It just speaks to the leadership. They have done a great job. You want to keep coming back. It is enjoyable.

TEACHER VOICE: I used to be a police officer. I worked with the youth in the same area where I students are from. I saw a lot of them getting in trouble and just didn't have the time to deal with them like you want to. That made me get into it. Then I helped my wife tutor a little bit. She said, "You are good at this. Why don't you try, so here I am now." I don't think I would do anything else at this point. It is something I like to do. I like coming to work and I like doing it. I don't miss too many days. My wife says, "If you don't feel good, don't go in." I like coming to work.

TEACHER VOICE: I truly feel like I can do all things. I am not being arrogant or cocky. I know I want to the best for my students. I know my name is attached to them so I want my students to be the very best that they can be. I would never say, "You can't do that." I would say, "You can do anything that you set your mind to do." I kind of like brain wash them into thinking that you can do it. Don't say you can't do it because you can.